



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Tony Avella

Senator Avella Declares That There Is Still Work Left to Be Done for Reforming Queens Library

TONY AVELLA August 25, 2015

Senator Avella renews call for bill to reform library after NYC Comptroller Audit

(NEW YORK, NY) In light of New York City Comptroller Scott Stringer's audit of the Queens Borough Library and its scandalous financial records, as well as the newly announced \$14 million allocation to the Queens Borough Library, Senator Tony Avella renewed a call of support for his bill to address the glaring lack of oversight on these institutions which receive large amounts of taxpayer money. Senator Avella declared that, while there was an agreement to support further reforms in the coming legislative session, there has been a deliberate hold on such an effort.

After it was revealed that former Queens Borough Library President Thomas Galante engaged in corrupt spending, reform measures were proposed in the Senate and Assembly in 2014. Senator Avella warned that the proposals did not go far enough to prevent future incidents of corruption and negotiated tougher provisions into the bill. Through Senator Avella's efforts, the law now mandates that library records be subject to Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) requests, and requires the library to hold yearly public budget hearings.

Senator Avella, however, predicated the passage of the bill on an agreement with Assembly Member Jeffrion Aubry to prioritize a bill that would implement further reforms and make the Queens Borough Public Library subject to the city's Conflict of Interest law. This bill, authored by Senator Avella, recognizes the major sources of public funding that the Queens Borough Public Library receives and obligates it to be subject to the same ethics and freedom of information requirements as all other quasi-public agencies who must comply with these important laws.

“Our reforms have gone a long way towards safeguarding public funding, but there is still a lot of work left to be done. The egregious misuse of taxpayer dollars in the case of Queens Borough Library highlights the need for more accountability and more transparency. I am confident that the Queens Borough Library, once it is subject to the same public and legal standards of all other agencies, will serve as an example for reforming all of New York City's library systems,” **said Senator Tony Avella.**

Senator Avella's legislation would address the ongoing need for accountability and transparency, which would ensure that children and the community benefit from these funds, not officials who misuse them for personal expenses.

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